MONTEREY NEWS

May 2012
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The Town

by Maggie Leonard

Town elections are Tuesday, May 8, from noon to 7 pm. Historically town elections have been held during the annual town meeting, but at last year's meeting the change was approved in order to allow election workers to participate in the town meeting. Please don't forget to vote!

The annual town meeting will be held on Saturday, May 5, beginning at 9:30 am. Prior to that there will be a short special town meeting at 9:15 am to deal with a transfer of $6500 to the Fire Department. Fire Chief Shawn Tryon explained that a few months ago the Fire Department went to a fire and the engine on Engine #1 wasn't operating properly and was revving. After returning to the Firehouse they called the manufacturers in Albany, who came to Monterey to look it over. They had to take it back to the factory for further diagnostics, which revealed there were electrical problems. They fixed the problem, and according to Chief Tryon Engine #1 is fully operational.

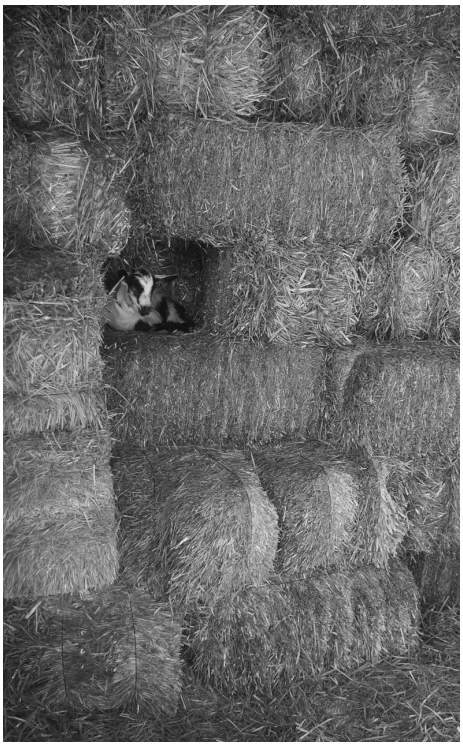
In order to prepare for the annual town meeting, let's take a look at the warrant and review some of the highlights.

The Proposed Budget

First come the line items where all the town boards and departments make their budget requests for the next fiscal year, from July 1, 2012, to June 30, 2013. The Finance Committee unanimously voted to recommend a 4% across-the-board raise for all full-time town employees (who received no raise last year) and also recommended the 4% increase for some part-time elected officials such as the Town Accountant, the Treasurer, the Tax Collector, and the Assistant Assessor.

The Tax Collectors expenses went up $1,000 for the purchase of a new computer. Finance Committee member Stanley Ross said that the current computer might be as much as ten years old, and it's definitely time to replace it. While I had Ross on the line I asked why the Town Clerk's salary was going down by $2,500 (to $16,215)? He replied that since the Town Clerk will be new to the job and less experienced, the Finance Committee thought that should be reflected in a lower salary.

Planning Board expenses are up $400



Susan Sellew

Hannah Jabobson-Hardy

Spring at Rawson Brook Farm: (l) Chickpea; (r) Laurily with her new kid on the block.

in case they need to hold a special town meeting in the next few months to deal with the zoning bylaw revisions. The board was unprepared for the amount of expenses over the past few months associated with the zoning bylaw overhaul, such as advertising and printing of the zoning bylaw revision (60 pages) for meetings and public hearings—the result being that the Planning Board overspent last year's budget. The increase reflects an attempt to more accurately estimate costs and be prepared for additional meetings and the attendant advertising and printing costs.

Police Department expenses have increased to $74,669, up by $8,390. Chief Gareth Backhaus explained that around $48,000 of that is for part-time officers and the other $26,669 represents operating expenses, most notably fuel costs, which continue to rise. Backhaus said, "I probably didn't add enough with the way fuel costs are going up. We try to keep our costs low, but fuel just won't cooperate."

The Fire Department is asking for $5,000 more than last year and Fire Department Chief Shawn Tryon said that that increase is also due in large part to increased fuel costs, which, he says, "drive up the cost of everything." He described the Fire Department budget as "very lean" and said that if things break they often cannot be replaced (the firemen repair things). Tryon stated that they are also trying to avoid the situation they have this year of needing to have a special town meeting to cover their costs.

Building Commissioner Don Torrico is requesting an additional $4,100 to cover expenses for a new computer program that will streamline the building-permit process for contractors. Torrico explained that last year Monterey was awarded a $13,000 Challenge Innovation Grant that provided for the purchase of a GPS/GIS device, a computer, and a printer. He said the computerized system allows contractors to enter their information once, and when they access the system again all the appropriate fields will have the correct information. All the towns in the southern Berkshire will share the system, and there will be an option to pay for permits online using something called UniBank.

The line item request is to cover the yearly subscription cost of the computer software that will send information gathered in the field with the GPS/GIS device to the contractors' existing permit information. (GIS is an acronym for Geographical Information Systems, the merging of cartography, statistical analysis, and database technology.) The system will also enable the Building Inspector to take accurate measurements in the field for lot lines and setback distances.

Costs for the transfer station are slated to go up $4,000. Director of Operations Maynard Forbes said that the increase is due to, yes you guessed it, increased costs of fuel and increased volume. Finance Committee member Stan Ross explained that the contract with the town's hauler, The Master Garbologist, is on a per load basis and is not a fixed dollar amount, but the costs from the contractor to the town are going up.

The Highway Capital line item request is increasing from $65,000 to $70,000. Director of Operations Forbes explained that this account is what the town contributes to capital projects and, together with Chapter 90 money from the state, is spent on road reconstruction, paving, and major drainage work. Forbes said, "This year that money is going to be spent on rebuilding Beartown Mountain Road from Tyringham Road to Fairview Road, including replacing the large culvert by the dam, improving drainage, reclamation, and paving." He went on to say, "In 2001 a ton of blacktop cost $30; today it's almost $100. So paving that cost $50,000 then costs upward of $150,000 now."

Zoning Bylaws Revision

The biggest article on the warrant, Article 4, is a complete overhaul of the

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Zoning Bylaws to be presented by the Planning Board. At last year's town meeting $11,000 was approved to hire consultant Mark Bobrowski to work on a reorganization and clarification of the Zoning Bylaws. The Planning Board met with Bobrowski throughout the year and worked on the revisions at nearly every Planning Board meeting since last May. A Planning Board public workshop meeting was held on Tuesday November 15, 2011, but was very sparsely attended. A public hearing held on Monday April 2, 2012, to review the proposed Zoning Bylaw revisions was also sparsely attended. That means that the proposed revisions will be new news to most people at the annual town meeting.

Here is a synopsis of the revisions proposed by the Planning Board. The most obvious change is the reorganization of the Zoning Bylaws; like the current Zoning Bylaws, the revision begins with explaining the purpose and authority of the bylaws and then, instead of a section on definitions it goes directly into describing the districts. The definitions section is in the back of the bylaws like a glossary. The Districts section proposal will include maps for a visual reference to describe the parameters of the Business District, the two Lakeshore Districts, and the Agricultural-Residential District. The consultant proposed eliminating the written descriptions, but the Planning Board voted at the public hearing to include the written as well as the maps.

Abbey Keith

Monterey resident Jim Yearwood takes a break during Learning Ally's annual Record-A-Thon event to pose with Production Director Jennifer Golin. During the week of February 27–March 2, the Berkshire Unit of Learning Ally (formerly Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic) sponsored Record-A-Thon 2012 in conjunction with Read Across America Week. Learning Ally is a national nonprofit organization that provides recorded audio textbooks and other materials for individuals who cannot effectively read standard print. If you are interested in working as a volunteer with Learning Ally, call the studio to get more information: 413-637-0889.

Other proposed revisions include making sure that our Zoning Bylaws do not contradict any state laws, regulations, or codes as the current zoning bylaw does; specifically, the section on Building Permit Exceptions in the current bylaws has incorrect information and, thanks to the help of our Building Inspector, the revision proposes language that agrees with the state Building Code.

The Planning Board is proposing tables to be included for the Use Regulations and has also created tables for the Dimensional Requirements and the Parking Regulations. The proposed revision adds some new definitions to update the bylaws and make them more comprehensive. For example, we have at least one bed-and-breakfast in Monterey, but the current bylaws have no definition

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for them, and they are not mentioned in any Use Regulations. (Only in Uses by Right: "the renting of room and furnishing of board by an owner." This is antiquated and doesn't really address B&B's).

One change the consultant recommended is to provide the Planning Board with site plan review power. Site plan review allows the Planning Board to review plans for commercial or multifamily properties and make recommendations based on what is best for the town. For example, if a new commercial enterprise were proposed in the business district, the owners would have to submit a plan to the Planning Board for review. Site plan review, if approved by voters, would allow the Planning Board to have a voice in the visual aspects of new businesses and multifamily dwellings and how they would affect the town. The Planning Board would not be able to reject a project based on a site plan review, just suggest modifications. Site plan review is not for single-family dwellings and pertains only to multifamily dwellings and commercial, industrial, nonmunicipal educational, or religious uses. Site plan review is also used for large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic facilities and common driveways.

The proposed revisions to the Zoning Bylaws are a lot to digest at the annual town meeting and the Planning Board will make a full report. The Planning Board will also propose a couple of amendments to make sure that all the language is legal and will pass muster with the Attorney General's office. The Planning Board's consultant, Mark Bobrowski, attended the informational meeting on the warrant on Friday April 27, and will be attending the Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, May 5, to answer questions.

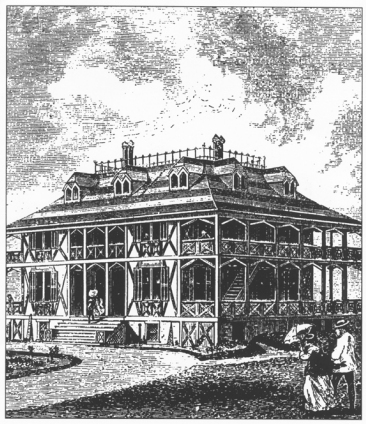
Other Warrant Articles

There is an article requesting funds to paint Town Hall ($18,000), an article to install HVAC in Town Hall ($15,000), and an article for the town audit ($14,000). Stan Ross of the Finance Committee said that the state requires that the town be audited every three years. Other articles request funds for which the outcome is a foregone conclusion because the town approved loans at previous town meetings and we are still paying them off, such as $46,356 for the loans on the Kenworth truck and the pickup truck and $72,935 for the loan for construction of the EPA-mandated salt storage shed.

The Fire Department is applying to voters for funds for the following items: a thermal imaging device ($6,500) that detects heat in walls and other unseen places; a rescue vehicle ($210,000) equipped with medical equipment that will help stabilize patients until an ambulance arrives; and hydraulic rescue tools ($37,320) that are basically Jaws-Of-Life items (Jaws-Of-Life is a brand name)—the tools include the hydraulic power unit, a spreader, a ram, and airbags. Last year the Fire Department purchased a new parrot's beak, which will also work with any new hydraulic rescue equipment purchased.

Another article requests $5000 for MontereyFest, a combining of LakeFest and I Love Monterey Day. I Love Monterey Day was always popular, but as the same cast of characters worked hard on the event year after year they grew weary. Then LakeFest burst onto the scene, and it was great to have another way to celebrate Monterey. No doubt the folks who ran that popular event are tired too. The new group on the scene is MontereyFest, and they have new energy and are working to put on an event for this summer. The event will include all aspects of the town including the lake associations (Buel and Garfield), the Bidwell House, the Park Commission, and anyone else who wants to be involved.

The Friends of the Wilson-McLaughlin House (FWMH) are requesting $10,000 to help with their $165,000 capital



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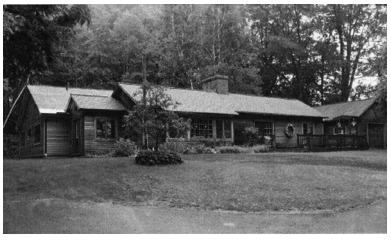

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campaign. Although the FWMH have endured some setbacks and some amount of criticism, the fact is they have replaced the roof of the house, instituted a Community Garden, overseen the installation of a new driveway, and written countless grants, all on a shoestring budget. The Finance Committee does not support this request, but Select Board member Wayne Burkhart is strongly in favor of granting the funds, pointing out the progress the group has made with little in the way of funds. The FWMH still have their (collective) eye on the prize of renovating the Wilson-McLaughlin house for a community center, and have not been daunted by skeptics.

An article from the Police Department proposes a new Alarms Bylaw. The proposed bylaw outlines the requirements for obtaining an Alarm Permit, describes alarm operation and outlines maintenance procedures, outlines a schedule of fines based on the number of false alarms, and requires all new alarm systems to be equipped with a Knox Box(a small, wall-mounted safe that holds building keys for fire departments, emergency services, and police to retrieve in emergency situations).

Toward the end of the warrant is a citizen petition to see if the town will vote to approve a resolution asking our Senators to support a constitutional amendment to overturn the January 2010 Supreme Court ruling on *Citizen's United v. Federal Election Commission* stating that corporations and incorporated unions have First Amendment rights to spend unlimited funds to support or oppose candidates for elected office. Although it's near the end of the warrant this could be the most important vote taken at the annual town meeting with the most far-reaching implications.

Other Select Board Business

The Select Board had fewer meetings held in April than usual. There are currently only two Select Board members (due to Jon Sylbert's resignation in January), and one went on vacation so there wasn't very much the remaining board member could do. There was no Select Board meeting on April 2 or April 9, and the following Monday was Patriot's Day so the meeting was held on Tuesday, April 17. The Board quickly got back to work and reviewed plans for Memorial Day. The Select Board is inviting everyone to join in the Memorial Day Parade, including the Fire Department, the Bidwell House, Gould Farm, the Little League, kids with decorated bicycles, dog walkers, and anyone else with a patriotic flair who wants to come and be part of the remembrance.

The Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Mary Makuc the Town's Accessibility Access Monitor. Building Commissioner Don Torrico suggested the appointment and added that state law prevents him from filling the post.

The Select Board reviewed a letter from the Southern Berkshire School Committee outlining the new ad hoc committee that will be tasked with researching the outlying schools situation. The Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD) is on record as wanting to close the small, outlying schools (Monterey, New Marlborough, Egremont) in the district because they are a drain on finances. The SBRSD also contends that the small schools are sparsely attended and do a disservice to the students because they are not equipped with the latest technology. Those opposed think that the small local schools are perfect both for the young children who attend them and are an asset to their towns. There are actually two committees being formed: the aforementioned ad hoc committee at the behest of the SBRSD, and one specifically from Monterey to research implications specific to Monterey and make recommendations. Please contact the Select Board if you would be willing to serve on either committee. ॐ

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How Town Budget Relates to Your Property Taxes

If you are reading this paper before the first weekend in May, you are, no doubt, excitedly awaiting town meeting. This is the time when we voters approve the town budget of approximately three million dollars. Around 85% of this budget will be funded by real and personal property taxes. The other 15% will come from state unrestricted appropriations, auto excise taxes, and fees such as disposal area, building permits, etc. Since the big issue facing most voters is the property tax, I've prepared the following charts comparing, for the last five years, our neighboring town's tax rates on residential property, total amount of property value to apply the tax rate to, and, most importantly, the amount of the budget covered by the residential tax levy or burden on tax payers.

Residential Tax Rates	2008	2012	% CHG
New Marlborough	$6.46	$8.77	35.8%
Sandisfield	$8.25	$10.10	22.4%
Great Barrington	$11.28	$13.12	16.3%
Lee	$11.76	$13.67	16.2%
Sheffield	$11.74	$12.84	9.4%
Otis	$6.20	$6.78	9.4%
Tyringham	$5.52	$6.00	8.7%
Monterey	$5.10	$5.27	3.3%

Total Taxable Property ($millions)	2008	2012	% CHG
Otis	$545	$621	13.9%
Sheffield	$563	$623	10.7%
Monterey	$467	$500	7.1%
Sandisfield	$230	$235	2.2%
Great Barrington	$1,351	$1,351	0.0%
Tyringham	$184	$184	0.0%
Lee	$886	$880	-0.7%
New Marlborough	$496	$456	-8.1%

The tax rate is very misunderstood. It can't be established until after the voters approve a budget for the next year and the books are closed on June 30 so the beginning financial position can be determined. Two primary factors determine the tax rate: the total value of taxable property and the amount that has to be raised by property taxes after other revenues have been identified. Both factors could change dramatically; for example, the state, the largest acreage owner in town, is tax exempt, but it recognizes this is a burden on towns like ours so it makes payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT). Since the state doesn't have to do this, during tough economic times, the amount could be slashed, causing the taxpaying property owners to make up the difference. This single revenue stream covers about 8% of our budget!

Once the amount to be raised is agreed upon, the assessors must determine, with state oversight, the value of the taxable property. The assessors just finished our tri-annual re-evaluation. The process involves hours of negotiations with the state to explain for example why our property values are slightly rising while other areas of the state are declining. How the assessors determine the assessed value is really another article topic. The changes are generally calculated from recent property sales and new construction, but there are many other factors as well.

The tables show this relationship between tax rate and taxable property clearly. Notice that New Marlborough's tax rate has increased 35.8% over five years and its property values have dropped 8.1%. Additionally the amount funded by residential taxes has increased dramatically by 24.7%. In New Marlborough's case, both factors have increased the tax rate, declining amount of property value to tax and increasing amount of budget paid by the property tax. Great Barrington has no

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Taxes Levied on Residential Property ($thousands)	2008	2012	% CHG
Sandisfield	$1,743	$2,184	25.3%
New Marlborough	$3,018	$3,764	24.7%
Otis	$3,178	$3,954	24.4%
Sheffield	$5,777	$6,909	19.6%
Lee	$7,226	$8,452	17.0%
Great Barrington	$12,201	$14,050	15.2%
Monterey	$2,298	$2,542	10.6%
Tyringham	$959	$1,047	9.2%

change in taxable property so its tax rate increase of 16.3% correlates to the 15.2% increase in residential taxes needed to fund its budget.

Financially, Monterey looks to be doing things really well: lowest tax rate, moderately increasing taxable property, residential taxes required to fund the budget increasing at less than the rate of inflation for the past five years. Good job voters! Good job Finance Committee! Good Job Select Board! Good job Assessors! Have a happy town meeting!

Postmortem

The data used here is publicly available at MASS.gov/DOR/. Then click on the following options: local officials, municipal data bank, data bank reports, property tax information. Each town sets its own priorities for spending on services valued by that town. For example Egremont has a town-owned water department but Monterey has a private water company not affiliated with the town government. The real issue is not the services provided but how well the costs have been controlled over time.

If you multiply the tax rate of $5.27 times the taxable property of $500 million you won't get the amount levied on residential property. Some of the taxable property is nonresidential. Also, other factors are involved, such as state-required funds set aside to cover unpaid taxes, changes to individual property values due to errors or negotiations (called abatements), and reductions in tax bills for the elderly, disabled veterans, etc.

— Steve Pullen

Memorial Day in Monterey

A Memorial Day ceremony will be held at 11:00 am on Monday, May, 28, at Monterey Veterans Memorial Park, Route 23 at Blue Hill Road. This year the WW II Veterans are to be celebrated.

Allan Dean will be back to add his music on the bugle to the ceremony. Pastor Elizabeth Goodman will offer a prayer, Mary Kate Jordan will bring her special thoughts, and WW II Veterans will add their words on their experiences and thoughts of that memorable war. The Firing Squad of Veterans will add their salute with antique Monterey guns.

Come and share this special ceremony, celebrating all veterans, and families, with dignity, that has its own personal meaning to so many. This park is yours, you made it possible.

Remember, the Memorial Day Parade starts at 1:00 pm and proceeds through the center of town from Sandisfield Road to the Firehouse, where refreshments will be served,

— Dean P. Amidon, Chair.
Veteran's Memorial Committee

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Volunteers Sought FOR SBRSD Task Force

The SBRSD School Committee will appoint an eleven-member Task Force to recommend to the School Committee by December 1, 2012, or earlier, actions to respond to the following:

1. How might the SBRSD educational program (PK–6) be configured to attract and retain interested and engaged students?
2. How might the SBRSD accomplish the above given the capital needs of the District, the changing demographics of the area, and the financial impact on the five towns in the District?

Select Boards of each town are asked to submit three names of individuals to be considered for membership.

SBRSD Administration is asked to submit three names of individuals to be considered for membership.

Elementary Faculty is asked to submit three names of individuals to be considered for membership.

Elementary School Council/PTO/PTA are each asked to submit three names of individuals to be considered for membership

Citizens of the Five Towns are invited to submit their own names or recommend others for membership.

The name, contact information and a brief statement of qualifications/interest in the task should be sent to Catherine B. Miller at cbmiller1941@gmail.com or PO Box 7, Sheffield, MA 01257-0007 no later than the close of business on May 4.

Elected and appointed town officials are ineligible for membership on the task force, but may be called upon by the task force for input and expertise.

Plans Progress for MontereyFest 2012

On Saturday morning, April 21, it was "standing room only" at the Monterey Library as plans for MontereyFest 2012, scheduled for Saturday, August 18, were being discussed by a group of enthusiastic volunteers. Fulltime and part-time Monterey residents crowded into the Knox Gallery to share ideas with co-chairs of the event, Mayra Rodriguez and Dorene Beller.

As a community-wide celebration, MontereyFest 2012 will feature events sponsored by the Fish Hatchery, Gould Farm, Harvest Barn, Bidwell House, Monterey Library, and the Cultural Council. On behalf of the Monterey Historical Society, Christine Goldfinger is currently compiling information about all of the historic sites in town. This material will be published in the MontereyFest 2012 program brochure.

MontereyFest 2012 is being funded, in part, by the Town of Monterey. Fundraising efforts will be in place to supplement any shortfall.

Questions? Suggestions? Volunteers? Contributions?

Feel free to contact Dorene Beller, dorenebeller@yahoo.com. or Mayra Rodriguez, rodriguez.mayra77@yahoo.com,

Cloth and Civilization at May Community Potluck

Susan Batchelder, at the April Community Potluck, gave a marvelous talk about the history and importance of handwriting, and how the lack of emphasis on it in our schools today may be compromising students' hand-eye coordination and changing certain patterns in the brain. She returned Thursday morning to pick up a book, and gave the talk again to the Coffee Club!

For the May potluck, we have local author and fabric designer MaryPaul Yates, whose firm, Yates Design Inc., provides innovative color, design, and marketing solutions to a diverse, international residential and contract interior furnishings clientele. She says, "Although we are touching fabric nearly every moment of our lives, most of us don't give the origin of fabric much thought—on either the level of how a shirt got into a store, or how fabric making has evolved through the ages." She will give us a whirlwind tour through history and across cultures and encourage listeners to consider the important role that cloth plays in civilization.

The last Monterey Community Potluck Dinner of the season will be held on Wednesday, May 16, at 6 pm in the Fellowship Hall of the Monterey Meetinghouse. Please bring a dish to share with a serving utensil, and a place setting and silverware for yourself. Everyone is welcome.

— Barbara Dahlman & Kyle Pierce

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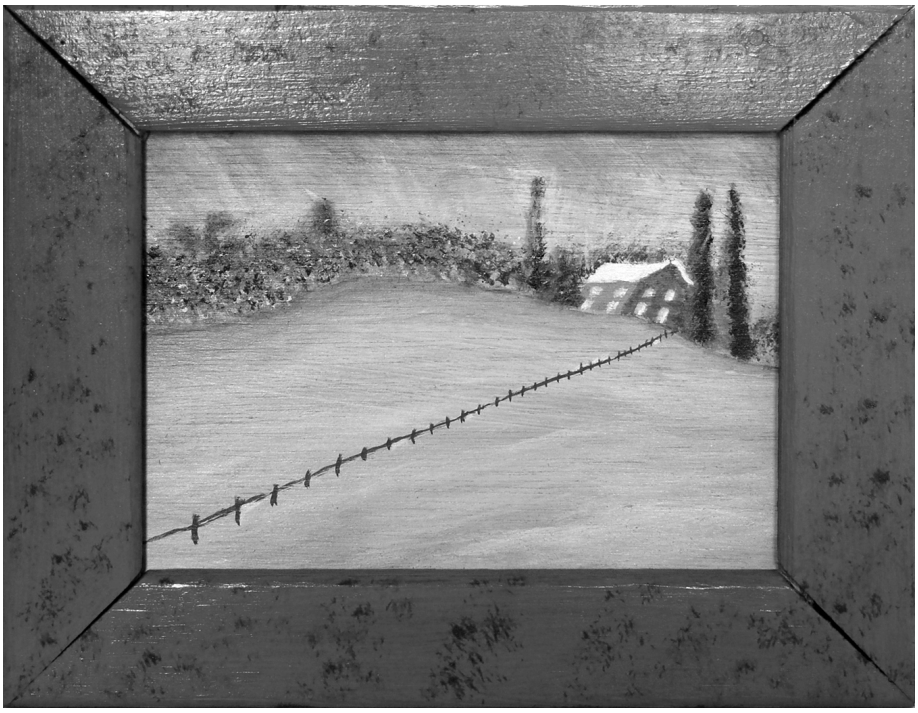
My Life with a Painting by Kit Patten

Kit Patten is a Monterey artist with a new show at our library in the Knox Gallery. He had a show last year in Great Barrington and I went to the opening, to be neighborly, also because I'd heard rumors about the hors d'oeuvres. For some reason, I don't gather up assumptions about anybody's paintings, maybe because I've seen a few I didn't like so much. On the other hand, the snacks are generally great.

This show changed my life. All assumptions were right on the mark, both social and gustatory. But the big gift was how much I loved the paintings. In fact, I had a birthday coming, so I let slip a small hint to the painter I live with: Get me that little painting with the red frame!

Now I see Kit's painting every day. I am the proud and happy viewer of "Ian's House III," a small marvel propped on the desk in my home hideout.

The frame is red, or orange-red, with suggestions of bluey-violet in a sparse and misty way. The painting is representational, so even I can figure out what it is. It is a curvy blue-white snowfield with a diagonal reddy-orange fenceline leading up and back to Ian's house. This is in Monterey, next door to Kit's and Connie's. This house at the edge of the snowfield matches the frame in an orange way, and every window is lit, even the entire roof is lit with yellow that warms you up on a winter day, or any day. It is a small house, about an inch tall on the painting, and it is crooked and curvy, like the field. It leans a little against some slim dark evergreens, tall above it in a warm sky.



Joe Baker

Ian's House III*, by Kit Patten (acrylic on wood, with recycled panel and frame collected at the Monterey Transfer Station).*

I have been careful not to say I am the happy "owner" of this painting. That's not how I feel. I live with it. I am the lover of this painting, the partner. We have a relationship. Okay, I'll say the relationship is mine—but it is a shared thing, a real get together: me, the house, the frame, Kit Patten, Ian, curves and colors. We're all together here in my home hideout.

— Bonner McAllester

Kit Patten's *Visionary Landscapes* at Knox Gallery in May

The Knox Gallery at the Monterey Library is pleased to announce that Kit Patten will be showing his *Visionary Landscapes* during the month of May. The show will open on May 5, with an artist's reception on Saturday, May 26, from 7– 9 pm.

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Monterey Library Notes

CWMARS (Central/Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing) has been preparing for several years to switch to new library software, known as Evergreen, to improve the performance of the collaborative system that ties together over 150 libraries in Central and Western Massachusetts. For the past year several dates have been projected. Memorial Day weekend has finally been scheduled for this change. There are some things patrons need to know about this process. From Friday, May 25, until Tuesday, May 29, you will be unable to access your library account. When you are able to log in again on Tuesday your old password will not work—the new temporary password will be the last 4 digits of your library card barcode. As soon as you enter and are successfully logged in, you will be required to set a new password. Any reading history or wish lists you have on your account will not be carried over—so export those lists before May 27.

Some of the benefits of the new system include the end of the two separate Central and Western Catalogs—there will only be one catalog, which will save having to search in two catalogs. The Patron Login will be easier as you can come up with a user name so you won't have to remember and correctly type a 14-digit barcode. The patron account will be more intuitive.

The library staff have been training for almost a year but expect that until the system is here we won't be able to learn all the tricks of the new system. Thank you for your patience. Also—please remember to bring your library card if you come in over Memorial Day weekend—we won't be able to look up your number.

Libraries have been reinventing themselves within increasingly smaller timeframes. Technology and patron needs have driven these changes if the public library wants to be of value in this day and age. Research and reference questions have dwindled over the years as researching information has become so easy on the Internet. However, there are disadvantages to information on the Internet—you need to know that just because something is on the Internet doesn't mean it is correct. For that reason libraries subscribe to databases that are verified and checked for accuracy. Some of these databases are available through CWMARS, and more are available through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (Google MBLC and click on electronic databases). Those are available to all of us with CWMARS cards.

I recently went to a talk about the resources of the Boston Public Library. Many years ago the BPL became known as the Library of Last Recourse. Every year Massachusetts has given the BPL 50 cents for every person in the Commonwealth so it can provide extra services to everyone in Massachusetts. Few, if any, of us took the time to drive to Boston to take advantage of this. New leadership recently changed the name to Library for the Commonwealth and broadened the mission of this venerable institution. As the Library for the Commonwealth, the BPL will develop and maintain a statewide digital library in conjunction with Digital Commonwealth. Residents will be able to access a spectrum of resources, ranging from local town records to research collections of academic institutions, historical societies, and archives across the state.

In addition, through the Boston Public Library's e-Card program, residents will continue to enjoy instant access to online services, including a broad selection of electronic databases, e-books, downloadable audio books and music, and a wealth of digital images and books. Reference and research services will continue to be supported in person, online, by telephone, and through written inquiries. Traditional access to collections of research books and journals in a range of subjects remains important through in-person visits and the interlibrary loan program. Expanded digital lending through the Internet Archive's scan-on-demand program, including expansion of existing partnership with Perkins School for the Blind to serve visually-impaired users, will provide access to research materials most needed by residents.

It is refreshing to see that even the Boston Public Library can reinvent itself. Not too long ago, all of this would not have made a difference to us out here in the west, but now that the digital age is upon us I urge you to take advantage of this resource. An e-Card from the BPL takes less than five minutes to sign up for and will be valid for two years before you will need to renew it. If you signed up before and lost your information, simply sign up again. The eligibility requirements allow anyone who owns property in Massachusetts as well as legal residents to sign up for these benefits. That means second-home owners are eligible. You will be able to look for eBooks and downloadable audios as well as do research in some of the most renowned collections around from your own home. One subscription that a Monterey patron has found especially valuable is JSTOR, through which many premier academic journals can be accessed online! It is amazing to see years of journals on shelves somewhere reduced to digital form on a disc—now it can be retrieved online. New leadership has recognized that the BPL can truly be there for all residents of our Commonwealth regardless of where they live.

— Mark Makuc, Library Director

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Bidwell House Museum News

Early American Songs Concert

The Bidwell House Museum will open its season on Sunday, May 27, with a concert and opening reception at 3 pm. Singer-songwriter Diane Taraz will sing "Songs of Home and Hearth" from her early American repertoire and play her lap dulcimer and guitar to celebrate the opening of the museum. Refreshments will be served.

Looking for Antique Tools

The Bidwell House Museum is offering a new education program to area school classes that invites children to explore how the early settlers lived in the Berkshires. The kids enjoy a hands-on experience and look at how the land was cleared and homes were built, how food was grown and preserved, and how other household tasks of the time such as cooking and sewing were done.

The museum would like to grow its collection of tools for the education program and is inviting donations of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tools. Do you have an old hewing broad axe, old hammers, mallets, hatchets, splitting wedges, paring adzes, hollowing gouges, chisels, awls, splitting froes, sawyer's props, bark spuds, barking axes, boring machines, sledges, or a seed planter, sheep shears, or horseshoeing tools from this period? Maybe a tool is lurking in the back of your barn that you can't identify? If you would be willing to donate something to the museum, please contact Robert Oakes, Administrative Manager, at 528-6888 or email bidwellhm2@gmail.com to see if the museum could use it. Handling real antique objects is a great thrill for young people, and they are grateful for the opportunity. Thanks for considering a donation.

Museum Invites Volunteers

The Bidwell House Museum is seeking volunteers in several areas:

Township No. 1 Day, Saturday, July 7th, 1 - 4:30 pm: a short-term commitment, guaranteed to be a fun day. We need help with general setup and running of the day and would love someone to lead children's and youth activities (crafts, a ball game, a treasure hunt . . .). This is a great opportunity for high school students seeking community service hours as well. Township No. 1 Day is a free community celebration of Tyringham and Monterey history. We are planning live music by local musicians, children's activities, a baking contest, antiques appraisals featuring Charles Flint of Charles Flint Antiques; craft demonstrations and more. The event is supported in part by a generous grant from the Monterey Cultural Council and the Tyringham Cultural Council.

Join the Garden Angels, Saturdays at 10 am for gardening fun, led by Ruth Green. This is a wonderful opportunity to be with a group of neighbors, learn more about gardening, and help make the museum's heirloom vegetable garden into the beautiful and bountiful special exhibit for visitors from near and far that it is every year. Please call 528-6888 if you are interested. The first day will be Saturday, May 19, 10 am.

Become a Museum Guide! If you would like to learn about Monterey colonial history, enjoy meeting people and giving tours, please join us! An introductory meeting and training will be held on Thursday, May 31, at 11 am. Call 528-6888 for more information.

The Bidwell House Museum's mission as a New England heritage landmark is to use the history of its land, house, and collections to reimagine, re-create, restore, and research colonial and early American life in western Massachusetts.

The museum is open Thursdays to Mondays (closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays) from 11 am to 4 pm, with tours on the hour, Memorial Day to Columbus Day. The museum grounds—192 acres of woods, fields, historic stonewalls, trails, and picnic sites—are open all year free of charge. The program of events can be found on the museum's website: www.bidwellhousemuseum.org.

— Barbara Palmer, Executive Director

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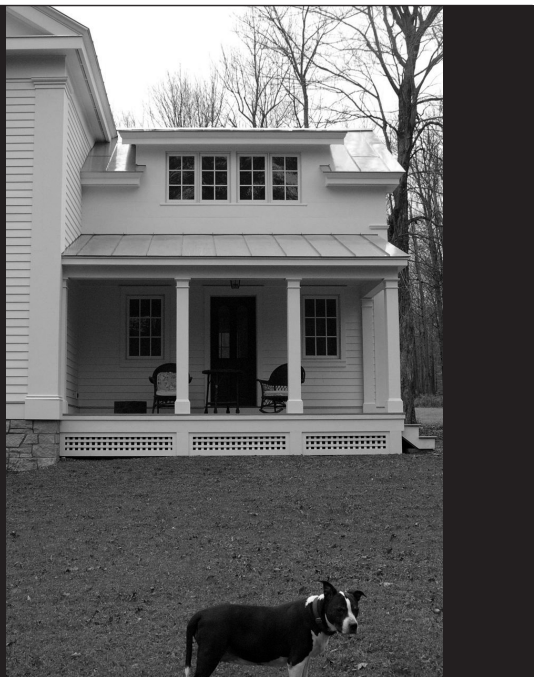

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Suzanne Sawyer

April Wildlife Sightings

Bluebirds, bears, woodcocks, mergansers, hop merchants. It must be spring in Monterey. Many thanks to all the folks who called up and wrote in with what's been stirring. In early April we got a bluebird report and fine photo (above) from Suzanne Sawyer. This nest box is one they made at the New Marlborough Family Day and put up in February. Already it's got a handsome resident.

Michelle Arnot-Brown reports a couple of "ground birds," as she puts it: a ruffed grouse crossing the road and a ring-necked pheasant by the firehouse on Route 57 over in Sandisfield. Both can fly, but like other wild chicken relatives, they more often stay on the ground, for nesting and for foraging.

Cora Baker had two mergansers on her pond on the east end of Hupi Road, and Steve Rose phoned up to report them also on Lake Buel in the middle of the month. Steve saw a woodcock, too, in the swamp there, bobbing up and down.

Also in the Lake Buel neighborhood, Kyle Pierce had two pileated woodpeckers near her place. Then, on a drive to the Monterey dump, she saw a baby black squirrel "splayed out" on the road and stopped for a look, thinking it must have been hit by a car. But, no. The squirrel showed no visible injuries and even moved its head and limbs a little. Kyle carefully put it off to the side of the road, and when she came by after the dump run, the squirrel had revived and taken off. This is a "happy report," says Kyle. If she'd left it in the road, the next dump runner might have done some real damage. Kyle figures it must have been stunned from falling out of a tree.

Steve Snyder, at a recent Monterey News Board meeting, reported having recently seen his "best bear yet." This is significant, coming from Steve, who lives at Gould Farm where people see bears so often they don't even remark on them, let alone think to tell me. Steve was on his bicycle, very quiet, and was able to watch this excellent bear, munching away on new green grass, without ever being noticed himself. This is a rare thing, for any of us watchers.

On Beartown Mountain Road, Alice O. Howell has been visited by a bear also, but this one came right into the garage to forage in the trash can. Alice reports many bright yellow goldfinches earlier in the month, but she is missing them now as she has taken in the birdfeeders to save them from damage by bears. (No wonder the bear had to head for the trashcan—no birdseed.) In the mammals department, Alice has had a porcupine up in her willow tree and a coyote crossing the lawn. Her most exciting visitor this month, though, was a big goshawk, the first she has seen.

Nature Hike with Bonner McAllester May 19

The Monterey Cultural Council welcomes people to join that Monterey Nature Bug, Bonner McAllester, on Saturday, May 19, 10:00 am to noon, to admire the coming of spring along one of our fine Monterey walking trails. Participation is limited to the first ten who call to register, so get right on the phone if you want to go. Call John Heffernan at 644-9235 to sign up and get details, such as the place and any possible postponement for weather. Last year it snowed at the end of April for this hike and we went anyway, plus we had the postponement hike the next weekend! It was win, win.

The butterfly report this month is Michelle Arnot-Brown's sighting of an Eastern Comma, the adult airborn version of a caterpillar also called a "hop merchant." We see these here on Hupi Road every year, enjoying our hop leaves, also our generous patch of nettles. My butterfly book says, about the hop merchant: "Farmers believed they could determine the value of their crops by studying the silver and gold markings on the butterfly's pups, which they found dangling from hop leaves" (*Butterflies Worth Knowing*, C.M. Weed, Doubleday, 1917, quoted in *Butterflies of the East Coast*, Cech and Tudor, 2005).

Call or write with your sightings.

— Bonner McAllester
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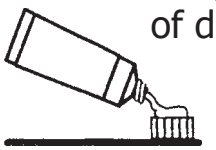

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Route 23 Monterey

From the Meetinghouse . . .

Ah, Spring!

May flowers are a cliché, of course, but aren't you glad to see them?

The (May 2011) photos above show a reason why I love having, even in my very casual way, a Berkshire flower garden: friendship blossoms. One is a close-up of my LeProvost lilac bushes in bloom, a cherished gift now maybe ten years old. The iris is one my friend Helen Squitieri gave me while she still lived in Connecticut. I look forward to their flowering later this month, and to the other friendship blooms which will appear later in the year.

As April closes and May opens, the spring continues to bring signs of new life. In the woods, the coltsfoot blossoms have trotted off, too, leaving their green leaves behind them. The air's filling with more, and more varied, birdsong.

Even without the showers that are supposed to announce their coming, the trillium trilled before the end of April. Now the vinca and the violets are spreading under the trees. Deer have stopped eating the tips of the iris leaves in my garden, as more tasty fare must be available. Forsythia bushes are gentling into green.

A black bear dashed safely across Route 57 in front of my car, east of town.

And, Scott, a warm hello to you, and to the newly regenerated Monterey General Store, from your friends directly across the street. It may sound like a cliché, but . . . *Aren't we glad to see you! Welcome!*

— Mary Kate Jordan

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"Verdant Monterey" Knox Gallery Summer Exhibit

The lushness of countryside green with vegetation is the theme of the Knox Gallery summer 2012 exhibition, with an opening on July 7. You may interpret this theme any way you're inspired to: literally, figuratively, abstractly, reflectively.

The exhibit is open to all Monterey residents and friends and includes work in all media. Work must be delivered to the Library by July 3, 9:30 am to noon. In order to participate, you need to fill out an "Entry Form," which can be found at the Library, at Town Hall, or online at the Monterey Library website, www.montereyma.gov/public (go to Town Departments and then The Library) and must be mailed to Ellen Grenadier, PO Box 551, Monterey MA 01245 and received by June 26. Pickup of work will be on August 27 or August 28, or by other arrangement.

Do you have an idea for a show? New show proposals are encouraged, and exhibition proposal forms with details will be available at the Library by May 1.

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The Fool Hollow Fox

Miracles take place anytime, but the Fool Hollow fox appeared to me on Easter. By now he is a recurring vision, one of those tales from the road, another chance occurrence for which I am grateful. At the time, he was a real live fox, napping on a sunny morning, with his tail pulled over his face and his ears standing up. If I made a sound, I bet he took it in, even in his sleep. If I gave off a molecule of any kind, I bet his fox brain processed it and let him keep sleeping. I was no threat to him, and no meal either.

Fool Hollow is not around here and it's not the kind of place I usually go camping. I was in the town of Show Low, Arizona, on the Mogollon Plateau (pronounced "Muggy-own"). This was the last campsite of a two-week trip. I'd come by bus and train, gotten off up north in Winslow, and rented a car. I was on my way back to the train. On the ride out I'd lost my jacket, left it on the train, and found the high Mogollon country pretty chilly. So on this last night back up there I stopped in Show Low at a thrift shop to see about getting a jacket. I asked the clerk about the forecast and she said it would be 28 F. that night. I said I was camping and she showed me where the jackets were.

Another customer had heard us talking. She asked where I'd camp and I said I hadn't decided, was looking at the map. She suggested Fool Hollow and said I'd like it as it had showers, hook-ups, all that. I said that's great but I was looking for something a little less civilized.

In the end, this kind woman took me to her neighborhood and offered me a grassy place to put up my tent at the bottom of her road. It was a bit built-up and I did not think a campfire would fit in. The temperature was dropping and my new purple jacket was calling to me. So Mary Ann (my new friend) gave me firewood from her own stash and talked me into going to Fool Hollow after all. She said her grandchildren loved the place. I was feeling agreeable by now and the sun was going down.

Fool Hollow has a dammed up reservoir, not too big, and lots of parking spots for RVs. There is also a Tents Only loop so I headed out there, put on the purple, lit up Mary Ann's firewood, and cooked my last supper on the road: dried corn, beans, and squash from the home garden in Monterey. Soon I'd be back home planting the next crop.

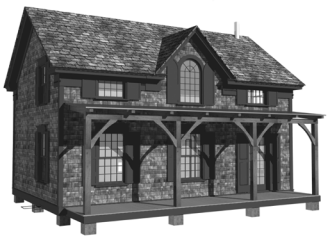
Sunday morning, chilly and clear, the last of that kind woman's firewood, time to strike camp. The sun came up so I took off the purple, put on binoculars and went for a walk. Pretty soon I met a man with a tall tripod and a mighty camera lens. He asked if I'd seen any birds and I asked if he'd taken any photos. We got talking and found we were both interested in wildlife. He says, "Did you know grey foxes can climb trees?"

I say, "Well, yes, though I've never seen one do it. I know they go up after bird's eggs and have sharp claws more like a cat than a dog."

At that my new pal tells me he often spends time at Fool Hollow, and has seen a pair of grey foxes. He has seen them when their pups first come out of the den, even had a little fox come right up to him with a clump of fur in its mouth, growling and playing. My friend says, "I can show you where the male sleeps during the day."

So we walk along and after awhile he stops, his attention on some geese out on the water. Buzz, buzz, goes his big camera. Then he says, "See the fox? He's right up there." I look at a rocky rise of land near us, but my pal is pointing straight overhead.

This is what I see: thirty feet up in a big ponderosa, there is a broad level branch. A foot or so out from the trunk I see a rounded patch of grey against the reddish bark, with two sharp ears lit by the



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midmorning sun. Through the binoculars I get closer, and there is a fine big fox, his belly on the branch and his tail around over his face. He may be sound asleep, but the ears are always on the job.

I squat down, elbows on my knees, binoculars up. This is a stable arrangement that lets me hold still for a long time, up close to the miracle of the Fool Hollow fox. I'd had a run of good luck, every step. Lost jacket, chilly forecast, Mary Ann, firewood, Fool Hollow, camera man, fox in a tree. I can picture him anytime, get transported, run those lucky steps again and again.

— Bonner J. McAllester

And Your Choice for This Year's Movie Night Is?

The top five movies suggested for the Monterey Parks Department's Movie Night are:

Wizard of Oz
Despicable Me
Raiders of the lost Ark
ET
Over the Hedge

Now it's your turn to decide which movie will be shown. Submit your vote to montereyparks@verizon.net.

The Movie Night will be on Saturday, August 4, in Greene Park.

— Monterey Parks Department

Music & More's Murder Mystery Writers' Contest
Death by Organic Food

Mystery writers, prepare for death: The 2012 Murder Mystery Writers' Contest, sponsored by Music & More and the New Marlborough Village Association, has set a June 15 deadline for submissions to the annual contest.

This year's contest, titled "Slice 'em & Dice 'em or *I think I need to Lie Down Now*," culminates on August 4 at 4:30 pm with a free public reading at the Meeting House at the village green on Route 57. Judges will select the top three winners, with prizes of $300, $200 and $100.

Guidelines call for the victim or victims to be killed off with organic edibles that are ingested, absorbed, or otherwise introduced into the body with lethal intent. In addition, this year each story must include at least one cliché relating to the story (e.g., "blood is thicker than water"). A humorous approach is welcome but not required.

After the readings, the top three winners will be announced and awarded prizes of $300, $200, and $100.

- Deadline for submissions is midnight, June 15, 2012.
- The contest is limited to full- or part-time Berkshire County residents.
- Manuscripts must be emailed to mysterywriterscontest2@gmail.com, or send on a CD to John Manikowski, P.O. Box 149, Mill River, MA, 01244. The *first* submission will be the *only* manuscript sent to judges so do not send more.
- The writer's name may not appear on the manuscript; submit name and contact information on a separate cover page.
- No hard copies will be accepted

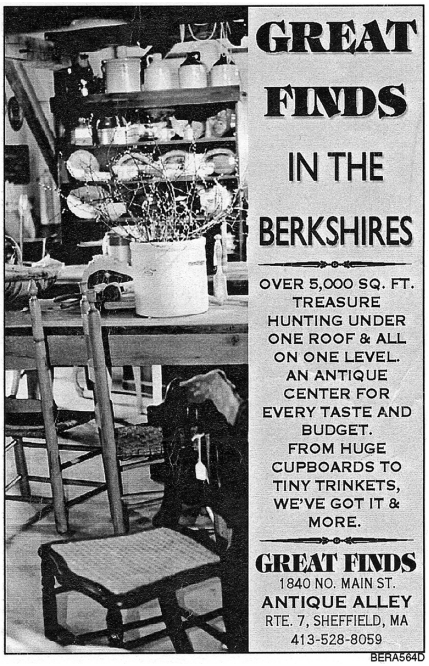
This contest, conceived and directed by John Manikowski, is made possible through a grant from the New Marlborough Cultural Council together with New Marlborough's Music & More program.

More about this year's contest and last year's winning stories can be found at http://www.newmarlborough.org/Writers.htm.

Personal Notes

Ezra Marcus, a junior at Monument Mountain Regional High School, recently performed in the state finals for the national Poetry Out Loud competition. He recited poems by Garrett Hongo, John Donne, and Alberto Rios in the Old South Meeting House in Boston. Ezra is the son of Nancy Richard Marcus of Monterey and Michael Marcus of Monterey. Congratulations Ezra!

Readers are encouraged to send personal notes about local folks to the editor so the community can know about all the good things they are doing.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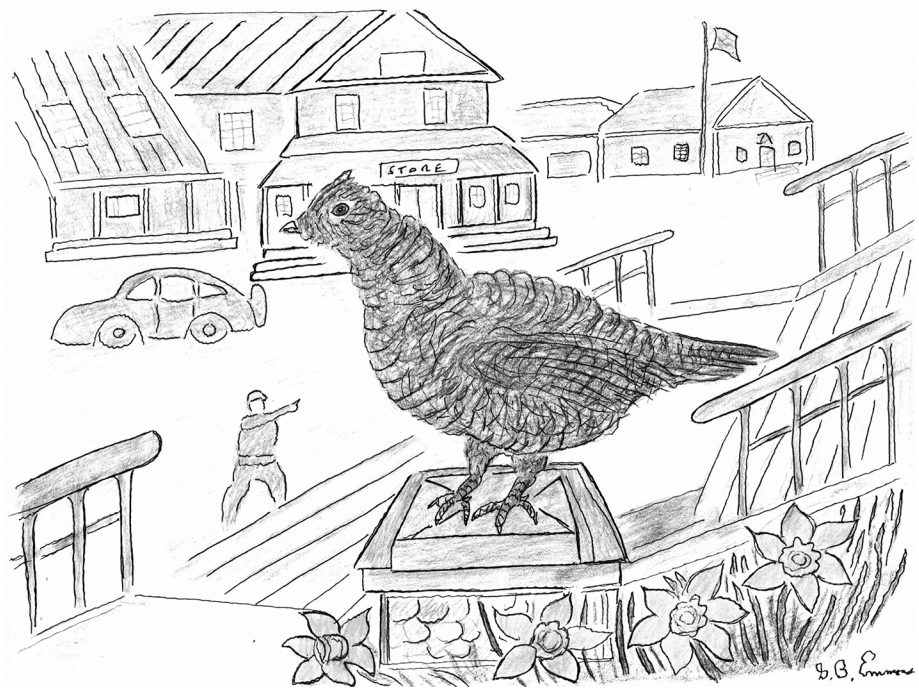

In early April word was out around Monterey that a tame grouse was hanging out in the center of town. It was no April Fool's joke! Motorists did a double take watching it cross the street as unconcerned as a stray barnyard chicken. It was also there every morning near the church steps when I came to make coffee in the basement. After a few days it got even friendlier and came toward me with a quiet call, "kreet kreet, kreet," that sounded like it wanted to be friends.

I remembered that a few years ago there was a similar tame grouse on New Marlborough Road near Colta and Gary Ives' driveway, when it was so close it would peck anyone trying to pick it up. This remarkable behavior of a wild game bird is rare, but happens enough to be recognized and classified as a self-tamed ruffed grouse. When the first settlers in colonial times penetrated virgin habitat, most of the grouse were similarly quite tame and were labeled as Fool Hens because they had not learned that their survival depended on fear of humans.

Another report dates back to the year 1914, on Deer Island, Maine, when two summer visitors, Roth M. Torry and Martha G. Knight, heard neighbors talking about a similar situation. They found a grouse that would walk toward them when they whistled and then follow them as if it wanted company. By the end of the summer, it would climb up in their laps to eat berries in their hands. They also noticed it had a fondness for the color blue when they were wearing it, but stayed at a distance when they wore red.

In all the cases I have studied, the friendly game bird is always a hen, possibly because the males are busy with macho drumming on a log to establish their territory. But both sexes are usually very sagacious, and the hen is a wary mother, well known to risk her own life by feinting a broken wing in front of a fox to save her chicks. So, as animal behavior professor B. F. Skinner of Harvard would have said, "Fear of humans is a conditioned reflex," eliminating those who flunk the course. The lesson also points to Darwin's survival of species and the mortal examples of the extinction of the passenger pigeon and, more recently, the heath hen of Martha's Vineyard.

Today, in the deep conifer forests of states near Canada, spruce grouse are also Fool Hens, sitting very still when encountered, hoping not to be seen, which makes them vulnerable; they are now permanently protected by law, ensuring their future. Grouse around the world are often called partridge and have a folklore image in music, art, and literature. Archeologists have found their bones with those of humans in the Pleistocene Period. In such numbers they were an easy and plentiful food supply. The reason for their name in the title of this article is preserved forever in the limestone pages of time.

— George B. Emmons

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MSPCA Grants for Beaver Flood Control

Thanks to a grant from the Nion Robert Thieriot Foundation, the MSPCA has funding to assist with installation of water-flow devices to humanely, non-lethally, and ecologically mitigate beaver-related flooding in the Berkshires.

Any individual, town, business, or organization in the Berkshires can participate. The criteria are a willingness of all parties involved to resolve problems non-lethally for the long term; a site that is conducive to flow-device usage; and permission of the landowners and the local Conservation Commission to install water-flow devices.

To request assistance, send a description of your conflict site(s) and the limitations of your budget to the MSPCA for consideration. Starting in the spring, we will evaluate the sites to determine if they are conducive to flow-device usage.

The amount of funding offered to each applicant will depend on the number of requests, the amount of each viable request, and the ability of each requester to pay for part of the flow device, or the maintenance contract for the device, themselves.

Requests will be accepted throughout 2012 until funding is exhausted. Requests will be considered in the order received.

Send requests to: Linda Huebner, MSPCA, 350 S. Huntington Ave, Boston, MA, 02130, Lhuebner@mspca.org, voicemail 617-541-5104, cell 617-448-8997, or go to www.mspca.org/beaverfunding.

Bard College Summer Academic Enrichment Program for Teens

Bard College at Simon's Rock, long a leader in engaging high school students ready for more educational challenge, is offering nonresidential academic enrichment classes this July for rising eighth, ninth, and tenth graders.

Directed by longtime Simon's Rock faculty member Jennifer Browdy de Hernandez, the Summer Program will run for four weeks starting July 2. Students can choose from twelve different weeklong half-day classes in science, history, literature, media studies, and the arts, taught by experienced college faculty with a passion for making learning fun.

"As a mother of two teenage boys myself, I was aware that it was hard to find interesting local enrichment programs for them during the summer, other than the usual sports and crafts kind of day camps," says Browdy de Hernandez, who teaches Comparative Literature and Media Studies at the college. "So we've come up with short weeklong exploratory courses that are designed to be lively and hands-on, taking advantage of the great educational facilities our campus has to offer."

Students will be able to use and enjoy the college's state-of-the-art biology labs, as well as the new Daniel Arts Center, complete with theater and dance studios, cutting-edge video and music editing labs, and well-stocked painting studios. Field biology students will explore the 300-acre campus, complete with ponds, streams, forests, and fields, learning how to sample habitats and evaluate biodiversity.

Other classes will include science classes in biotechnology and the biology of life in extreme environments; local Native American history; Flamenco dance; social psychology and pop culture; painting in the Impasto style of Van Gogh; reading and creating graphic novels; and a suite of digital media classes that will engage students in the creation of digital music, digital animation, and digital journalism.

Three unique half-day sessions will be offered each week of the Summer Program. New sessions start July 2, July 9, July 16, and July 23. Morning sessions will run from 9:30–12:30, followed by afternoon sessions from 1:30–4:30. Students can sign up for a half day or full day of classes. Tuition is $300 per weeklong class, or $250 per class for two or more classes. In keeping with the Simon's Rock ethos of small classes, class sizes are limited to twelve students, so early registration is suggested.

To register, visit the Summer Program webpage at www.simons-rock.edu/summer.

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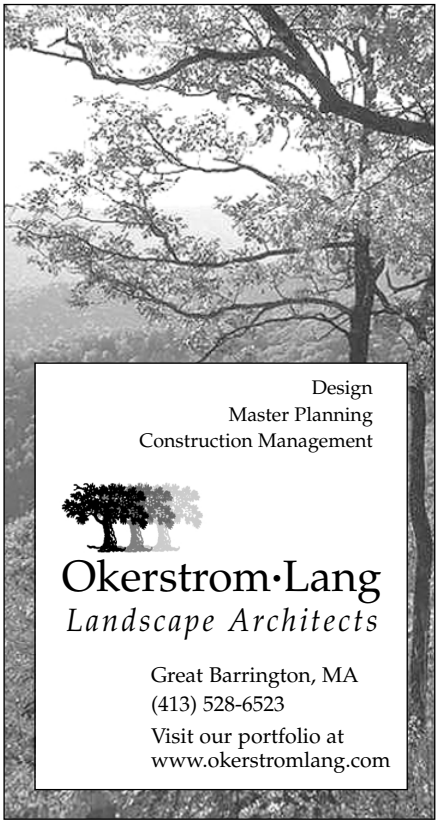

An Exercise in Character Building

Voicing your opinion on a so-called hot button issue usually draws the ire of those who disagree with you. Intellectually, I tried to prepare for it, but you don't know how you'll feel when the personal attacks start up. Character assassinations and name-calling are part of the game; the extent of ignorance and arrogance in the wider world of commentary is depressing. There is no way around it. I should start at the beginning, I suppose, or at the very least provide some context.

The famous white board—mentioned here a few months ago—still exists. At present, I'm fully occupied with the writing category; it's reflected in my new morning routine. First, as I think some of you probably remember from the days of the Monterey General Store, I cannot function well without coffee. Hence, my day begins with a delicious caffeine fix. I set up the pot's timer the night before, to start brewing five minutes before my alarm goes off at 6:25 and then it's waiting, hot and fresh, when I stumble into the kitchen. I settle in on my couch, in the fuzzy bathrobe with a fleece blanket, and open up my laptop. The sunlight, when the weather is nice, starts to reflect off the apartment buildings across the street into my apartment giving it a warm glow.

I start with what's happening in the world. The articles of particular interest get flagged for Facebook posts and my tweet schedule. I skim the *Washington Post*, *Huffington Post*, sometimes the *New York Times* and possibly the *Nation*. Next, I login to Twitter and set up the tweets schedule for the day; some are my own and some are re-tweets. By then it's a bit after 7:00 am and time for a coffee refill.

Now that I've gotten my news and social media fix, it is time for the more intellectual part of the morning, writing. A number of you have praised my writing skills over the years, and I genuinely appreciate the feedback. Still, the fact remains that blog writing and opinion pieces often require a more refined argument with statistics and a fairly strict format. My academic writing in college did little to prepare me for this type of writing en mass. Ultimately, I hope to develop a style that has a consistent and thoughtful voice, and to produce eight hundred words on a given topic in a relatively short timeframe. Morning time is practice time. The ideas or topics are sometimes from a news story I just read; other times it might be inspired by an upcoming calendar event or a recently published study.

The particular piece in question, for which I received resoundingly negative feedback, was a blog piece on tax day. I made a conscious decision to do this piece for April 16, 2012—when taxes are due the 17th. I was prepared for dissent and angry antitax comments and perhaps some personal attacks, but they came fast and furious. At first it was shocking, then it was hurtful, then frustrating, irritating, and, ultimately, depressing. I'd never admit this to most of the individuals, including the one who took time to call me "either deluded or evil," but I learned a tremendous amount in a very short time.

Upon reflection, I'd say there are three distinct lessons in this experience (more may make themselves evident eventually). The first is that a year ago, I would not have been able to handle this type of attack. I have to realize that I've matured and gained a new level of confidence. I can't say how or why, but I feel it. Being on the receiving end of this negativity is not fun; it probably never will be, but there will always be individuals who disagree, and some will do it in a nonconstructive fashion. As I consider moving toward a role in public life, I have to build a thicker skin, learn to defend my views in minutia, and let things roll off my back without losing total sensitivity.

Secondly, I need to learn ways to constructively engage some of the more reasonable comments, because I want to reward and express appreciation for those who took time to engage my ideas. I really have no desire to inflame the situation though, and any engagement is likely to add more fuel to the proverbial fire. We need more civilized dialogue amongst individuals with

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opposing viewpoints. Out of all of this, one of the most rewarding moments was when a Libertarian friend complimented me on my writing and the coherent case I made in a piece. He doesn't agree with my philosophy or some of the statements, but he took time to tell me I did a good job. When I disagree with someone in the blog world and take the time to comment, I start by acknowledging points I agree with and then usually raise issues of concern in question form. Ultimately, I need to do this more often. If I want my tone to reflect my real life mentality, it is doubly important to engage my ideological opponents.

Finally, I can always stand to improve, whether it is my writing or my arguments—or perhaps I may need to adjust my ideological stance on certain issues. Those who pointed out holes in the piece, or angles I did not discuss, were right. I'm not inclined to give them the satisfaction of acknowledging it, even if it makes me seem like the bigger person. What they actually did do was increase my commitment to making stronger arguments and I am guessing that was not the intent of their slander.

I dedicate my mornings to professional development in order to open and create future opportunities. I'm taking time to build up my connections from my couch: increasing my Twitter following, connecting with individuals on LinkedIn, posting on Facebook, writing articles or blogs, joining Pinterest, or of, course, reflecting on my journey through the writing of this column. I'll be turning twenty-five in a few weeks, and I sense that a new chapter is just beginning.

— Tarsi Dunlop

Political Musings from Monterey
Etch A Sketch Season

It was an unforgettable comment, one that will likely reverberate in political advertisements for the next six months or so. On March 21, Romney adviser Eric Fehrnstrom compared his employer's campaign to an Etch A Sketch. Instantly, both Democrats and Mitt Romney's Republican rivals reiterated their chief accusation against the former governor: ideological unreliability and political triangulation. It was a valid point. For several months, Romney's positions had transformed from those of a calculating centrist to those of a far-right politician. "Self-deportation," deep tax cuts for the wealthy, drastic cuts to social programs, and steep increases in defense spending entered Romney's lexicon as he struggled to depict himself as "severely conservative." Eliminating access to birth control, Pell Grants, food stamps—nothing was off the table. After this seismic shift, Fehrnstrom's comment shocked the media because it was an explicit announcement of another reversal.

Amid all the justified wondering about whether Romney is a conservative or a moderate, something has been overlooked. President Barack Obama has also been shaking his Etch A Sketch lately. In 2008, Obama campaigned and won on the promise of hope and change and the philosophy of reaching across party lines to build the framework for a post-partisan era. After his Administration lost its supermajority, the tactics changed out of political necessity. Obama shed his cautious moderate persona to pursue a full-throated progressivism and energize a grumbling base. Beginning with a speech in Osawatomie, Kansas, that channeled Theodore Roosevelt, he stopped trying to pass bills and began focusing on winning the election by recasting himself as a defender of the middle class. From a politicized deficit reduction plan with no goal of legislative success, to a politicized budget with no goal of legislative success, to politicized responses to Supreme Court proceedings, Obama has gone aggressively after every opportunity to draw contrast between his own beliefs and those of his Republican counterparts.

But the Etch A Sketch moment for Obama is not just a shift into "election mode" where he must motivate his most enthusiastic backers. It's a shift from big, transformative ideas like Obamacare, his signature accomplishment, to a more conservative mindset. This is an understandable tendency, but a regrettable one that probably dates back to last summer's failure to reach a "grand bargain" with John Boehner during the debt ceiling crisis. Instead of advocating sweeping tax reform or vital environmental legislation, the President has put all his energy into small, message-oriented ideas like the Buffett Rule. It's a strategy to win, but not a strategy to win *and* govern afterward. Etch A Sketch syndrome is spreading, and neither of the major party candidates is immune.

— Jonah Carlson

To read more from Jonah, visit www.politicalmusingsfrommonterey.com.

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"Garden Gustation"
What's cooking from Monterey Gardens & Farms

Abundant Asparagus

As I'm writing this we are about to get three nights of twenty-plus-degree weather. I fear for our fruit trees and other tender sprouts. I just hope the frost will take care of some of the weeds too! The spring seems to be in a holding pattern between the lack of rain and the cool weather; I've never seen our forsythia last so long. The asparagus has just barely made its presence known, and the peas are just peaking through the soil. The rhubarb is looking quite robust now, once we got the 1½" of rain. As I tend to the seedling nursery on our dining room table and only the greens are being harvested from our hoop house, I wonder optimistically about what we are going to do with the abundance of asparagus that we will soon have in our four-year-old asparagus bed.

This year I am trying an experiment in our asparagus bed. A friend of mine, who raises beautiful Cormo sheep, offered me the skirtings (the dirty wool around the edges of a fleece) from the shearing. I had read that some gardeners had used this skirting as mulch in garden paths. I was wondering if it might "felt" up with the rain and foot traffic and create a nice dense mulch that even Galinsoga (my nemesis weed) couldn't work its way through. There was the added benefit of the remaining dingle berries in the dirty wool being added to the soil. Another gardener friend also told me of the benefits of corrugated cardboard as mulch in the garden and its ability to attract earthworms. I went with both, cardboard in the asparagus bed paths with the wool skirtings laid on top. I must admit that it looks a bit strange when I gaze out over the garden. In addition, as I was harvesting our first spears, the smell of sheep was certainly nearby! I'm eager to see how this works out. Maybe some of our bird families might find it handy as a nesting material too.

We were very hopeful last year about the asparagus but were a bit disappointed with the harvest. Being ever hopeful this year . . . again, I'm wondering what it will be like when the freezer is stocked with plenty of asparagus soup, when we have roasted copious amounts and sliced it raw into salads until we are *sick* of the green spears. What then??? What indeed when there is still more? Well, I found a recipe — Asparagus "Guacamole." Now, it doesn't taste a lot like asparagus to me with all of the stronger flavors involved, and certainly not the best way to eat the first hundred spears of mild-tasting asparagus, but a tasty way to make "guacamole" without shipping an avocado over long distances.

Low Food Mile "Guacamole"

Underlined ingredients are ours or local.

This recipe is mostly a guideline to which you can add your own amendments. I would probably make it different every time, depending on what I have on hand.

Stephen Moore

Asparagus and their wool blankets.

Try some cumin, parsley, jalapenos, bell peppers, onion, garlic, lemon, etc. Enjoy!

15-20 spears of roasted asparagus (roasted with olive oil and salt)
¼ cup homemade salsa, or your favorite
1 T chopped cilantro
2 cloves crushed garlic
1 tsp lime zest
1 T lime juice
1-2 T sour cream (optional)
salt and pepper to taste

Place all ingredients (except sour cream) in a food processor and mix until nearly smooth. Stir in sour cream, if desired (we enjoyed it both ways), and salt & pepper to taste.

Chill guacamole for several hours or overnight for best flavor. Use as a dip for corn chips, as a spread in wraps, or to top off burritos.

Happy Harvesting!

— Wendy G. Jensen
wendygj@gmail.com

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Lynne Horvath

Local Artist's Painting on Exhibit at Smithsonian

Robert Horvath of Tyringham Road in Monterey is a well-known painter of aviation scenes from prior eras, mostly WWI, WWII, and Korea. His paintings are part of the Air Force art collection, the U.S. Marine Corps Museum's collection, and the Yorkshire Air Museum in Britain.

The Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian currently has an exhibit called *Fly Marines!* and one of Bob's paintings was included. He is seen here on a recent trip to the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., along with his grandchildren and his painting of a Marine Corp PBJ-1 (B-25) from VMB 611overflying the Island of Emirau in January of 1944. The painting is owned by the. Marine Corps and is part of its *Centennial of Marine Corp Aviation, 1912–2012*.

Bob works fulltime and resides with wife Lynne in St. Michaels, MD (and in Monterey as much as possible). He is a member of Air Force Artists and the American Association of Aviation Artists. He serves on the Board of the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge and enjoys every minute spent in the Berkshires.

Jazz at Knox Trail Inn 5/26

A Jazz Evening with Charles Neville is slated for Saturday, May 26, as part of the Knox Trail Inn Concert Series. World-renowned Charles Neville, the second oldest of the famed Neville Brothers, has a richly diverse musical background. Born to a music-loving family, he and his brothers grew up immersed in the sounds and culture of New Orleans, and the rhythm and soul of the city are reflected in Charles' wide range of musical styles. Charles' experience on saxophone has included rhythm & blues, funk, jazz, be-bop, popular, and even American Indian music. His influences include Louis Jordan, Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, and Professor Longhair.

The concert with Charles Neville and a buffet dinner is $35 for adults and $20 for children ten and under. The buffet begins at 6:30 pm with a cash bar, and the music kicks off at 8 pm. For those attending the concert only, tickets will be $15 at the door. Call the Knox Trail Inn for reservations at 413-269-4400, as space is limited for what is bound to be a memorable evening in Otis by this seasoned jazz musician. This event is cosponsored by the Otis Cultural Council and the Knox Trail Inn.

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Remembering Thomas Haugh

Thomas B. Haugh, 80, of Monterey, formerly of Norwalk, Conn., died peacefully Tuesday, April 17, 2012, after a five-year battle with cancer.

He was born on July 17, 1931, in Norwalk, Conn., to John Denis Haugh, DDS and Anne Burke Haugh. Tom graduated from Fairfield College Preparatory School (CT) in 1949 and Columbia College in 1953. He served as a captain in the United States Marine Corp at Camp Pendleton (Clif.) from 1954–56. He earned a master's degree in biology from the University of Pennsylvania in 1958.

Tom was a lifelong science teacher in Fairfield County, Conn. He began his teaching career at the former Andrew Warde High School (now Fairfield Warde High School), then moved on to Staples High School in Westport, Conn., where he taught biology and general science for thirty-one years. Tom was popular with his students and served as an advisor and coach to many of them during his long career. He retired from teaching in 1991.

Tom leaves his wife, Maureen Bradley Haugh of Monterey; his children, Heather Haugh Reynolds and Burke Haugh, both of Norwalk, Conn.; his son-in-law, Adam Reynolds, and his granddaughters, Charlize and Casey Reynolds, also of Norwalk; and his sister, Barbara Aiken, of Houston, Texas. He is also survived by his stepchildren, Kevin and Lynn Bradley of Newtown, Pa., Tara Bradley and Carol Beach of Little Compton, R.I., Katy and Noureddine Ouldsfiya of Methuen, Mass., and Meghan Bradley and Karen Boylan of Chelsea, Mass.; his stepgrandchildren, Marissa and Shane Bradley, and Isabel and Samir Ouldsfiya; and many nieces and nephews. Tom was predeceased by his first wife, Patricia O'Connell Haugh in 1988, and by his brother, John Haugh.

For over twenty years, Tom enjoyed life in the Berkshires. He had served on the Monterey Cemetery Commission for the last seven years. He was a season-pass-holder at Butternut Basin in Great Barrington and was often seen hitting golf balls at Egremont Country Club.

He was an avid reader and enjoyed lively discussions about politics and sports. He frequently played pickup hockey at the ice rink in Monterey and rarely missed a New York Rangers game on TV. Tom was a familiar face at Guido's in Great Barrington, as well as at Taft Farms, where he was a fan of Martha's delicious baked goods.

Donations in Tom's name can be made to HospiceCare in the Berkshires or to the Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Squad in care of Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home, 426 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA, 01230. Remembrances may be sent to the family through www.finnertyandstevens.com.

With Memorial Day coming up, Zachary Mielke, a fourth-grader at Muddy Brook Elementary and son of Michael and Kerry Mielke, made this collage to honor his grandfather Mike and all veterans.

Otis Cultural Council Annual Tag Sale May 26

Come one, come all! Looking for bargains, treasures, and that once in a lifetime find? Join us at the Otis Cultural Council's annual tag sale, where there will be many vendors for you to pursue. The event will be held Saturday, May 26, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Otis Ski Ridge parking lot off Route 23. (Rain Date, Sunday, May 27.)

Save the Date!

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Calendar

Every Monday except holidays: Select Board meeting, Town Hall, 9 am.

Every Tuesday: Zumba Class, 5:30–6:30 pm, Monterey Firehouse. $10/class.

Every Sunday: Softball, 10:30 am, Greene Park.

Saturday, May 5:

Annual Town Meeting 9:30 am, Monterey Firehouse.

Exhibition of Kit Patten's *Visionary Landscapes* opens at Knox Gallery in Monterey Library.

Tuesday, May 8: Town Election, Monterey Firehouse, noon–7 pm.

Thursday, May 10: Free Blood Pressure Clinic with Berkshire Visiting Nurse Assoc., Town Hall Meeting Room, 2–3 pm.

Wednesday, May 16: Community Potluck Dinner, 6 pm, Monterey Meetinghouse Fellowship Hall. MaryPaul Yates will discuss role of cloth in civilization. Everyone welcome. See p. 8.

Saturday, May 19: Nature hike with Bonner McAllester, 10 am–noon. Limited to first ten registrants. See p. 12.

Monday, May 21: Adult book group will discuss *My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult, 7:30 pm, Monterey Library. Newcomers welcome.

Friday, May 25–Monday, May 28: Library system software changeover; CWMARS accounts unavailable. See p. 10.

Monterey News

The *Monterey News* is an independent nonprofit corporation dedicated to fostering communication in the Monterey community. Our editorial address is P. O. Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245. We invite signed letters, articles, drawings, poetry, and photographs. Submissions may also be left in the drop box on the loading dock of the General Store. Address requests for advertising rates and further information to the Editor, or telephone us at 413-528-4347 or e-mail montereynews9@gmail.com.

Saturday, May 26:

Reception for artist Kit Patten to celebrate his *Visionary Landscapes* exhibition, 7–9 pm, Knox Gallery, Monterey Library.

Square and contra dancing, 8:30–11:30 pm, Dewey Hall, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Music by Mountain Laurel, caller Joe Baker, with guests. All dances are taught; beginners and children are welcome. Adults $8–10, children $5. Information 528-9385.

Jazz Evening with saxophonist Charles Neville, 8 pm, Knox Trail Inn, Otis. See p. 21.

Otis Cultural Council Tag Sale, 9–3 pm, Otis Ski Ridge parking lot off Route 23, Otis. (Rain Date, Sunday, May 27.)

Sunday, May 27: Bidwell House will open its season with a reception and concert of early American songs by Diane Taraz, 3 pm, Bidwell House Museum, Art School Road, Monterey. See p. 11.

Monday, May 28:

Memorial Day Ceremonies: 11 am, Veterans Memorial Park, Rt. 23 at Blue Hill Road; 1 pm parade through downtown Monterey. See p. 7.

Town Hall, Library closed.

The Observer
March 26–April 25

High temp. (4/16)	86°
Low temp. (3/27)	19°
Avg. high temp.	54.9°
Avg. low temp.	32.4°
Avg. temp.	43.7°
Total precipitation (rain and trace of snow)	2.47 in.

Precipitation occurred on 15 days.

Contributors

We thank this good person for her recent contribution. Your support makes it possible for us to keep going.

Sandra Collins

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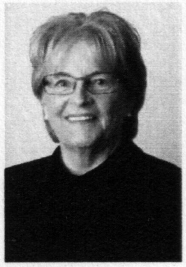

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Contributions from local artists this month:
George Emmons, 16; Tristian Goik, 23;
Bonner McAllester, 14

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